



the 1960s, residents have worked throughout the years to restore the acequia. Currently, the acequia in the Coyote Springs area is restored and in use. Restoration is being planned for the north side of I-40 in order to provide Carnue Land Grant with irrigated land along the Carnue Creek.

Environmental Issues and Concerns

Major environmental concerns identified in the planning process were water quality and wastewater issues. There are a number of residents in the plan area whose well water is not potable due to contamination of well sources. Many of the contaminated wells in the area result from septic waste that has made its way into the wells through the cracked rock formations. High amounts of naturally occurring arsenic and fluoride contribute to poor water quality. Another major problem is the ability to replace existing liquid waste disposal systems. The small lot sizes in the plan area limit the space in which septic tanks can be placed thus impeding the possibility of meeting current wastewater regulations. A major debate in the planning process examined the feasibility of allowing homes and businesses in the plan area to connect to the sewer line which runs from A. Montoya Elementary School in Tijeras through Carnuel connecting with the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County sewer system at Tramway Boulevard.

Over the years, the increased noise from highway traffic has become a nuisance. Since the plan area is located in a narrow canyon, the noise generated from high traffic volumes plagues the community with a constant “hum” of automobile movement. The community advocated mitigation of this noise pollution by the construction of a sound barrier on I-40. If planned in conjunction with improved wildlife crossings on the interstate, the barrier could serve to reduce noise and improve movement of wildlife through the canyon. Planners realize that a recommendation for such a buffer would have to be presented to the New Mexico Department of Transportation, who has jurisdiction over I-40.

III. LAND USE

The following section presents existing land use conditions and proposed land uses in the Carnuel/West Tijeras Plan area. The land use conditions of the study area are unique in comparison to other communities in the East Mountains due to the historic development patterns of the Carnuel community in which the majority of residential uses occurred before significant development regulations were created and applied to the planning area.

Residential Uses

The primary land use in the study area is residential. The majority of the housing is single-family dwelling units. The existing zoning is comprised of A-1, A-2, M-H, and R-1 zoning. Much of the western part of the plan area (West Tijeras) and some parcels directly



north of Echo Canyon are zoned A-1. The A-1 designation allows for a single-family dwelling unit or a HUD zone code II manufactured home on a minimum lot size of one acre or lot of record. A portion of the plan area is zoned A-2 which is located in the Monticello Neighborhood and the undeveloped land south of Coyote Springs. The A-2 zoning designation allows a single family dwelling unit or a HUD zone code II manufactured home on a minimum lot size of two acres. In much of the historic portion of the Carnuel community and in Echo Canyon and Coyote Springs the zoning is designated as M-H. M-H zoning allows the placement of a mobile home at least 40 feet in length, HUD zone code II manufactured home, or a single-family dwelling unit on a minimum lot size of $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre. A significant number of mobile homes are located on the south side of I-40 in Carnuel on the North side of I-40 along Highway 333, as well as in the Coyote Springs area. There is also a group of R-1 zoned properties around Juan Road in Monticello. R-1 zoning allows a single-family dwelling unit or a HUD zone code II manufactured home on a minimum lot size of $\frac{3}{4}$ an acre. The majority of existing residential development in Monticello and Echo Canyon is on lots averaging $\frac{1}{2}$ acre in size, whereas in some areas of Carnuel, the average lot is approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ acre in size.

The most significant residential use issue in the planning area in regard to is the overwhelming number of legally recognized non-conforming lots in the Carnuel area. This area is characterized by the older residential housing on lots that are well below the minimum lot size required by the zoning code. Many of the lots average approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ acre in size, a result of subdivisions by multiple generations of family members. Since the lot arrangements in this fashion were established before the development of a zoning code for Bernalillo County they are recognized as lots of record by the County. Some of these lots contain structures in addition to single family dwelling units. In the planning process, the *Traditional Community District* designation was created to describe the area where Hispanic community members have lived for many generations. Historically, higher density housing was centered around plazas, as in the case of the abandoned San Miguel Plaza or the placement of family home clusters known as *plazuelas*. The Traditional Community District is located north of I-40 around the Santo Niño Church (see Subareas Map, Appendix B, p.31). This designation acknowledges the small lot size and clustering nature of this historic area. A focus group convened to identify issues and develop solutions to some of the problems facing residents who reside within the Traditional Community District. These participants felt that the creation of this designation could be a catalyst for the development of strategies for protecting these residents.

Commercial Uses/Special Use Permits

A small number of businesses within the plan area are located along Highway 333. There currently exist approximately fifteen special use permits which allow the operation of commercial activities in the plan area. These include a horse stable, an auto repair shop, and several contractor's yards. In the community work sessions, the participants recognized the need to maintain Carnuel's rural character



by limiting the extent and scale of commercial uses to be located only along Highway 333. Businesses proposed in the future should only be allowed to be located on a limited number of properties along the corridor and should be small in size.

The constraints faced by commercial uses and their location are the small size and physical aspects of parcels located along the highway corridor. Along this highway corridor, there are very few parcels that are larger than one acre in size limiting the potential for large scale use. In addition, most vacant tracts of land along the highway corridor have a steep slope and are not at grade with Highway 333.

Nevertheless, there are also a number of sites that are adequate for small-scale commercial uses. The Old Route 66 corridor should serve as the employment and community center for the plan area and any non-residential uses will be focused in this area. Any future commercial uses should be small-scale and should address night lighting, drainage, and safe access. Existing commercial uses along Highway 333 should be allowed but any expansion in size or use should consider the area's character and must meet current Bernalillo County regulations.

Open Space/Recreation

The plan area is bordered to the north by the Cibola National Forest and to the south by the Manzano Mountains, which is managed by the U.S. Forest Service. In addition, there are tracts of designated Open Space owned by the State of New Mexico, the City of Albuquerque, and Bernalillo County.

One of the critical issues raised by work session participants is the need to connect existing open space lands with open space corridors for the purpose of developing wildlife corridors as well as to provide natural open space buffers. Participants also raised concerns for the preservation of the remaining large tracts of land such as the Coyote Springs Tract.

The natural beauty and accessible open space make the planning area a recreational destination. Currently, many Albuquerque residents utilize the area's open space for off-trail biking, horseback riding, hiking, and ATV use. Many bicyclists also use Historic Route 66 through Carnuel to the Sandia Crest. Along with the recognition of open space uses on public land by participants in the planning process, another identified need was restricting access along the Tres Pistolas Open Space Area to reduce negative impacts such as erosion and litter as well as to mitigate potential conflicts between local residents and recreational users.

Many participants of this planning process, recognize the need for increased coordination and participation by the various land owners for the purpose of improving open space corridors, scenic views, and improving overall environmental conditions. Due to increased



development and physical barriers to wildlife passages along I-40, Tijeras Canyon has been recognized as a federal priority for improvement of wildlife passages. A major consideration for preserving and improving open space corridors is to create a less restrictive passage for wildlife. Work session participants recommended improving connections between open space areas, placing limits on development along critical passage areas, and pursuing the acquisition of land owned by Hawk Watch near Coyote Springs would improve open space conditions and recreation opportunities for residents as well as improve conditions for wildlife. Some of these goals are already being met through the implementation of the Bernalillo County Parks, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan and the East Mountain Trails and Bikeways Master Plan.

Cultural Uses

The Santo Niño Church and the old Carnuel cemetery located directly south of the Santo Niño Church and the areas surrounding Santo Niño Road are cultural resources that should be protected. This entire area is used for processions and ceremonial dances in observation of San Miguel Feast Day and the Santo Niño Feast Day. The new Cañon de Carnue Land Grant Cemetery was developed in 2005 and is located south of I-40 along the frontage road. In addition to the large cross located directly north of I-40 near exit 170, there are also various *descansos* (highway crosses) located throughout the community along roadways.. Many of the crosses along the hillsides throughout the plan area delineate the historic markers of land grant common lands (for a map of the land grant's historic boundaries, please refer to Appendix C).

Future Development in West Tijeras

In total, there are 10 tracts of undeveloped land totaling approximately 552.81 acres located in West Tijeras. These tracts are zoned A-1, which allows for one dwelling unit per acre. A major constraint to development in the undeveloped West Tijeras is the lack of water and sewer service. Along with the residents in the overall plan area, land owners of the West Tijeras would like to see water and sewer service available in order to develop these tracts. The residential development pattern will follow some of the most recent proposals in the plan area.

For the purpose of developing a common understanding about future residential development in the plan area, it is important to discuss the development proposals for the entire West Tijeras area. There are currently approximately three existing subdivisions in the West Tijeras area with a total of about thirty single-family lots. The existing subdivisions are zoned A-1 and lots average one acre in size. In the undeveloped portions of the West Tijeras area, land owners and developers project this area will be developed at A-1 densities and homes built in this area may be similar to that of neighboring Four Hills.